



Self Assessment of Summaries Facilitated by Padlet to Improve Reading

Comprehension Skills

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English has become an international language, and its use is necessary to create communication bridges around the world. English proficiency broadens horizons, lowers barriers, and speeds of information exchange (Education First, 2019). Globalization has increased competition to enhance the English language more every day. Nevertheless, according to the EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI), in 2019, Ecuador occupied the 81st position with a very low language proficiency level among 100 countries worldwide and the last position in Latin America (Education First, 2019).

The traditional English teaching methods and pedagogical models based on teacher-centered activities, which are practiced yet in Ecuadorian public schools, can be contributing to these low results. The EFL (English as a Foreign Language) National Curriculum implemented in 2016 in Ecuador is aligned with The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The CEFR sustains that many students need to be empowered in their vision of learning languages to achieve the English proficiency level (Council of Europe, 2018).

However, to accomplish great results in English learning, it is necessary to apply correct strategies along with technology. Bransford et al. (1999) stated that “as a result of the persistent use of digital and mobile technologies, most students today are natural researchers and synthesizers of information” (p. 207). Technology in language learning converts learners from passive receptors to dynamic individuals who are connected with peers in their schools and other students around the world (Pareja et al., 2016).

This innovation, “Self assessment of Summaries Facilitated by Padlet to Improve Reading Comprehension Skills,” pretends to help 10th-grade students of the public school

“Leopoldo Mercado” located in Quito, who are in A1 level of English proficiency. The aim of this study is to improve reading comprehension through summaries, using self assessment to motivate students to monitor and reflect on their learning, raise awareness of their progress, and foster critical thinking skills.

According to the Ministry of Education (2016), by the end of Subnivel Superior of EGB, students will be able to identify the main ideas of written texts to produce a level-appropriate critical analysis of familiar subjects and contexts. The main problem students face is that they can not easily understand the main ideas in a text. Raising student awareness of main ideas and exploring the organization of a text is essential for good comprehension (Richards & Renandya, 2002). According to Bransford et al. (1999), one of the hallmarks of the new science of learning is its emphasis on learning with understanding.

The Ecuadorian in-service English Teacher Standards stated that teachers should “demonstrate knowledge of language teaching methods in their historical contexts” (Standard 5.a.1) so they can use such information to reflect on and improve their instruction and assessment practices to support students (Ministerio de Educación, 2012). The EFL National Curriculum consolidates learners’ cognitive, social, and affective language objectives in the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the Content-Based Instruction (CBI) methods (Ministerio de Educación, 2016).

The CLT method equips students with tools for generating unrehearsed language performance “out there” in “real life”. It facilitates lifelong language learning among students, not just with the immediate classroom task (Brown, 2000). Otherwise, content-based instruction (CBI) according to Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989) is the integration of content learning with language teaching aims (as cited in Brown, 2000).

Summarizing is not only a writing task that can enhance the meaning-making of reading. It is also a learning strategy that guides learners to construct and retain a gist of essential information from a text (Nurhayati & Fitriana, 2018). Summarizing allows the students to reduce the information in the passage to principal ideas easy to remember (Ministerio de Educación, 2016). Barreiro (2019) conducted a research to improve reading comprehension of narrative texts by using summaries, the results of this study were successful. When summarizing, self-questioning, predicting, self assessing, and rereading a text, learners increase their reading skills.

Students usually read a text for completing a task or because they will be assessed by teachers, but not often because they feel motivated to do it for pleasure or curiosity. “Motivation is an intrinsic thinking process initiated by students rather than an extrinsic one controlled by teachers.” (Brown & Knowles 2007, p.187). Brown and Knowles (2007) also explained that assessment is meaningful when it helps students reflect on their own learning and provides opportunities for self-assessment.

Logan (2015) mentioned that self-assessment and reflection are what need to be improved in the students. Learning to read by pleasure or intrinsic motivation will help students become lifelong learners. It increases the degree to which students transfer their learning to new settings and events, as cited in Bransford et al. (1999). Self-assessments can guide students to reach a profound and meaningful comprehension of the text, as well.

A very important tool to enhance comprehension, reading, and elaboration of summaries is the use of rubrics and checklists. These instruments can empower students to reflect on their progress before, during, and after reading. Stevens and Levi (2005) stated that “rubrics motivate students to think critically about using their learning, at the same time, they promote self-assessment and self-improvement, and most importantly, they promote intrinsic

motivation. Rubrics also develop responsibility and reduce stress (Panadero & Jonsson, 2013).

Literature Review

Reading is a powerful tool that helps students become reflective thinkers and lifelong learners. In this section there is a summary of authors that support the concepts related to reading comprehension, self assessment, summarizing, technology, and second language theory for improving reading skills.

Reading Comprehension

Reading is a pivotal component to help students develop critical thinking skills (Husna, 2019). Alismail and McGuire (2015) stated that critical thinking involves higher cognitive processes that empower students with the needed abilities to solve a problem. Trilling and Fadel (2009) determined critical thinking as the ability to analyze, interpret, evaluate, summarize, and synthesize information (as cited in Alismail & McGuire, 2015, p. 152). Therefore, by an appropriate reading comprehension skill that involves summary as an important critical thinking skill, students will be able to discuss, analyze, provide coherent explanations, generate ideas, and make judgments in order to propose the best solutions to a problem. (Alismail & McGuire, 2015, p. 152).

According to Drew (2013), some investigators found a significant correlation between problem-based learning activities and the critical thinking skills that learners will need in the 21st century (as cited in Alismail & McGuire, 2015, p. 152). “Learning to read is an essential aspect of one’s education, and literacy growth is often compared to athletes who train for competition, the world’s greatest athletes do not achieve that ability quickly or without practice” (Nurhayati & Fitriana, 2018, p. 36).

Self-assessment

Students need experience of self-assessment against criteria. Assessment should facilitate learning, and at the same time, what the students could do and how to do it in the future (Chen & Li, 2016). According to Brown and Knowles (2007), young adolescents are at a perfect age to learn how to be responsible for monitoring their own academic growth with some assistance from their teachers. To teach students to be responsible for their learning, teachers must set expectations related to the activities, set a schedule for completing tasks, and meet with learners regularly to check their progress and provide feedback.

“Self and peer assessment can positively affect student learning by helping them develop their reflective and critical thinking skills, as well as their self-confidence as learners” (Ndoye, 2017, p.255). Dochy et al. (2006) reviewed 63 studies and reported positive findings of self-assessment. According to Dochy et al., overall, self- assessment promoted self-reflection, problem- solving, and more responsibility for one's learning (as cited in Ndoye, 2017).

Fourteen-year-olds in the classroom enjoy having an opportunity to evaluate and improve their own work and constructively evaluate other peers' work. It supports cognitive growth (Wood, 2007). They are able to recognize, admit mistakes, make sense of their growth, and identify the changes needed to achieve their goals (Ministerio de Educación, 2016). The more practice they get in evaluating themselves and others, the more self-aware and more autonomous they will become.

Summarizing

The reading training strategies to develop an appropriate reading comprehension skill are: predicting, text mapping, and summarizing (Brown & Palincsar, 1984). In supporting this idea, Baleghizadeh et al. (2011) pointed out that one of the writing tasks that can guide

meaning making reading is the summary writing task. Summarizing can help students construct and retain a text, omitting unnecessary details, and organizing the main information of a text (Özdemir, 2018). Summarizing helps learners to explain the significance of information and to keep it in long-term memory (Barreiro, 2019).

According to Biggs and Moor (1992), the summary writing task can be broken down into the following processes: a) comprehension of the original text, b) ability to select and differentiate main ideas from supporting details and inconsequential information in the original text, c) transformation of these main ideas into the learners' written text, and d) the adoption of appropriate academic writing conventions (as cited in Baleghizadeh et al., 2011).

Summarizing is considered a very powerful tool for students to learn. Hattie (2011) ranked in his innovative study “Visible Learning”, 138 influences that are related to learning outcomes from very positive effects to very negative effects. He found that summarization has a 0.79 effect size that means a positive and strong effect on students’ academic achievement. It is vital to take into account that the interventions with the largest effect size for reading comprehension among students with learning disabilities encourage students to monitor their understanding before, during, and after reading.

Technology

Technology improves the learning experience in the learning processes (Saker et al., 2019). It helps teachers to design digital environments suitable for applying the principles of learning, implementing new technologies that are interactive. Learners can learn at their own pace, making learning more fun and dynamic. They can also collaborate on projects without the need to get together in the classroom. Barron et al. (1988) suggested: “environments in which students can learn by doing, receive feedback, and continually refine their understanding and build new knowledge” (as cited in Bransford et al., 1999, p.206).

The electronic texts have different characteristics; therefore, several comprehension processes and a variety of teaching strategies are needed. These texts are interactive and include multimedia formats, which require new thinking skills to make meaning, like deductive reasoning, to select a hyperlink appropriately in a text (Coiro, 2003). The digital texts offer opportunities to readers to interact with others and elaborate on their personal answers and publish their comments online to share with others (Coiro, 2003).

Second Language Acquisition Theory

Reading is a very important part of the learning process of a foreign language. The second language acquisition, as Krashen (2013) pointed out, occurs subconsciously. It happens without being aware of it. While people think they are just having a conversation, reading a book, or watching a movie, they are acquiring the language.

According to Krashen (1998, as cited in Brown, 2007), comprehensible input considered the core element of language acquisition theory, is the “only true cause of the second language acquisition”, therefore it is vital in this process that the learner understands via hearing or reading input language that contains structure ‘a bit beyond’ his or her level of competence...” (p. 295). Therefore, motivating students to read texts related to their real-world and considering their English language proficiency is vital to improve their reading comprehension skills while acquiring the language.

This innovation will explore self assessment of summaries facilitated by Padlet to improve reading comprehension. For this study, the following research questions will be proposed:

1. To what extent will students improve their reading comprehension through self assessment of summaries?

2. What are the students' perspectives towards this innovation?

Innovation

The innovation aims to have a base to improve reading comprehension through self assessment of summaries facilitated by Padlet. Students will be guided about self assessment to improve reading comprehension from their own experience. The class will be designed by applying a backward design plan (Appendix A) and using a topic of the micro curricular unit, which will last 8 teaching hours (2 weeks).

During these hours, students will try to develop reading comprehension through self assessment of summaries facilitated by Padlet. A checklist (Appendix B) will be used in order to self assess their improvements and correct mistakes. The activities will be performed using the module, examples, and resources from the internet. The instructions will be given for the teacher in each class, who will provide support in an organized way.

On the first day, the teacher will teach how to make a summary using some slides with examples to explain the steps to follow, introducing a short concept about it. Students make a short discussion to share personal experiences to make a paragraph summary based on a given text. On the second day, learners have to answer some questions by using information from previous reading and personal information. The teacher shows some slides to explain self assessment to reflect on their own learning providing a self-assessment checklist about summaries to students, so that they understand what self assessment is.

On the third day, the teacher chooses a song that tells a story and gives guidance during the class. Students make an outline to summarize the song by following the order to write the summary correctly. On the fourth day, to finish the activities, they have to share a video of the summary to post it in Padlet. Students will apply what they learned and reflect

on the strengths and weaknesses they have. Students will have the facility to use PADLET for two activities and share it with peers in and beyond the class.

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Appendix A

Design from Your Goals

Self Assessment of Summaries Facilitated by Padlet to Improve Reading Comprehension

Skills

Available upon request.

Appendix B

Self-assessment Checklist about summaries

Available upon request.